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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1758
INFO ASEAN/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 0256
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0276
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [BM](#) [GR](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: GREEK C-130S DELIVERING ASSISTANCE

RF: STATE 48651

Classified By: A/DCM Jeff Hovnier for 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) A/DCM met May 9 with Ambassador Alexios Christopoulos, Director of the MFA A10 Directorate for Asia and Oceania to raise reftel points on the humanitarian response to cyclone Nargis in Burma. In reply, Christopoulos made the following points:

-- Encouraging the Burmese regime to grant access for all international relief teams: Christopoulos said Greece has been in contact with Burmese authorities and has urged the Burmese authorities to be "as open and flexible as possible" in granting access to relief workers. Christopoulos said that the Burmese authorities are "very cautious" and worry that allowing too much access could undercut their "control of the country." Nonetheless, Greece will continue to raise this point with Burmese, and will support any EU efforts in this regard. Christopoulos added that Greek contacts are "limited" as Greece has no Embassy in Rangoon. The Greek Ambassador in Thailand is also accredited to Burma, but has visited the country "only once when he presented his credentials," as Greece has pursued a policy of limited contact.

-- Greek Relief Efforts: On May 7, FM Bakoyannis announced a Greek contribution of 129,000 Euros (200,000 USD) to go towards food assistance through the UN World Food program. Greece has also sent a C-130 filled with relief supplies (tents and blankets provided by the Greek Red Cross) and pharmaceuticals (provided by the NGO World Pharmacists), and is preparing a second flight that will likely depart "within the next two or three days." The Greek MFA has also released a press statement urging Greek citizens to donate to a special bank account at the MFA to provide additional relief funds.

¶2. (C) Christopoulos said that Burmese officials had "welcomed" the Greek C-130 relief flights. The first flight departed late May 8 and is currently en route. The second flight is expected to depart May 10 or 11. Christopoulos said that there had been some "difficulties" in obtaining overflight clearances from India (the Indians had approved a more limited overflight time to/from Burma than the Greeks

sought), but that these difficulties have been resolved. Christopoulos said the Burmese government issued overflight and landing rights for the Rangoon airport quickly, and has indicated that it will have personnel ready to off-load the Greek C-130 immediately upon arrival and take possession of the relief supplies.

SPECKHARD